Agreement with Philippines for Rice Varieties

915. SHRI CP. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the International Rice Research Institute, Philippines, have signed a work plan to produce germ plasm on 'Super Rice' for higher yield and 'Golden Rice' with Vitamin A; and

(b) if so, what are the salient conditions of the agreements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the International Rice Research Institute, Philippines, have signed a workplan on 15.2.2002. The workplan envisages to produce superior germ plasm for higher yield as well as nutritionally enriched for traits like provitamin A—also called 'Golden Rice'. In the workplan there is programme under International Network for Genetic Evaluation of Rice (INGER) which will provide access to wide range of genetic materials developed globally. The breeding lines developed in India will also be tested to a wide range of test environments. The programme will help in identification of sources of resistance to major stresses, identification and utilization of ideal rice genotypes for different ecosystems. The superior rice germ plasm for higher yield and pro-vitamin-A rich rice developed in India rices at International Rice Research Institute will be evaluated and utilized in breeding programme for suitability under Indian conditions.

Agriculture Growth in H.P.

916. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the rate of growth targeted and achieved in agricultural sector in Himachal Pradesh during the last four years;

(b) the target set for the year 2001-2002 and the likely achievement thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to improve the rate of growth of production in Himachal Pradesh, especially in hilly areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NAllAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Rules for financial help to KVKs

† 917. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the principles/rules formulated for providing financial help to Krishi Vigyan Kendras, being set up by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research in each district;

(b) whether the Standing Committee on Agriculture has expressed apprehensions regarding these principles /rules;

(c) whether these Kendras cannot be made a medium for providing latest scientific information with regard to agriculture, to be farmers; and

(d) if so, what steps Government are going to take in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) provides financial help to Krishi Yigyan Kendras (KVK) to meet the cost of salary of the staff, implementing its activities, development of modest infrastructural facilities, and revolving funds for running the instructional farm. The funds are released on half yearly basis on the receipt of audit utilization certificate and demand of funds,, commensurate with the progress reports and plan of action.

(b) The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture 1996-97 did not express any apprehension on these principles/rules. The

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.